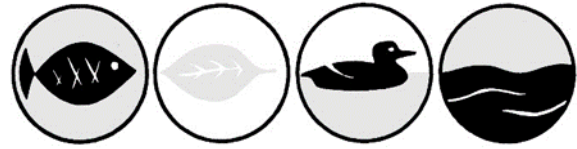


N.I.C.C.

April 2017 Newsletter



NATURE'S CHAINSAWS

NICC has been invaded by some of "Natures Chainsaws." It's war against the beaver. Who's going to win, NICC or the beaver? It appears that the beaver is heading for first place. If you've had the opportunity to come out to the club grounds in the past year, you probably have noticed there aren't as many trees surrounding the pond. In the past few years the beaver has taken down about 30 trees. Granted, some of our trees were in bad shape and would eventually need to be taken down anyway. We have tried to salvage some of the remaining trees by wrapping them with chicken wire.

The beaver's lifespan is about 10-15 years, and are considered to be large rodents and mate for life. They mate in late January-late February; 1-8 kits (usually 4-5) born after gestation of 4 months.

Active throughout the year, the American Beaver is primarily nocturnal and most likely to be observed in the evening. Beavers living along a river generally make burrows with an underwater entrance in the riverbank; these are known as bank beavers. Those in quiet streams, lakes and ponds usually build dams and a lodge. The lodge has one or more underwater entrances; living quarters are in a hollow near the top. Wood chips on the floor absorb excess moisture, and a vent admits fresh air. The chief construction materials in the northern parts of the American Beaver's range are poplar, aspen, willow, birch and maple are also the preferred foods. To fell a tree, the beaver gnaws around it, biting out chips in a deep groove. Small trees 2-6 inches in diameter are usually selected, though occasionally larger ones as much as 30 inches thick are felled; a willow 5 inches thick can be cut down in three minutes. On average, a beaver cuts down an incredible 216 trees each year. The beaver's cutting teeth (incisors) never stop growing. They are powered by huge muscles and kept sharp by grinding against one another. A beaver's molars are the perfect tools to mash and grind bark and twigs. The beaver trims off branches, cuts them into convenient sizes (about 1-2 inches and 6 feet long), and carries them in its mouth to the dam site. There it either eats the bark, turning the branches in its forefeet as humans eat an ear of corn, or stores them underwater for winter use by poking the ends into the muddy bottom of the pond or swift streams, dams may be bowed upstream; in times of flood, temporary spillways may be constructed. Dam repair is constant; the sound of running water stimulates the beaver to repair the dam.



Well adapted to its highly aquatic life, the beaver swims using its webbed hind feet, at speeds up to 6 mph. The tail serves as a rudder, and the forefeet are held close to the chest, free to hold objects against the chest or to push aside debris. When the animal is submerged for up to 15 minutes before surfacing for air. When the animal is swimming, usually only the head is visible, whereas with muskrats, both head and back are partially above water. The beaver combs its fur with the two split nails on its hind foot, and waterproofs it by applying castoreum, an oily secretion from scent glands near the anus. A thick layer of fat beneath the skin provides insulation from chilly water in winter.

On land, the beaver is far less at ease than when in the water, and frequently interrupts its activity to sniff the air and look for signs of danger. Beavers are believed to pair for life. Both parents care for the kits born in the spring. They are born well furred, with eyes open, and weighing about 1 pound. They may take to the water inside their lodge within a half hour and are skillful swimmers within one week; if tired, they may rest or be ferried upon the mother's back. On land, the mother often carries kits on her broad tail and sometimes walks erect and holds them in her forepaws. The young remain with their parents for two years, helping with housekeeping chores until they are driven away just before the birth of a new litter.

Great expanses of the U.S. and Canada were first explored by trappers and traders in search of beaver pelts, the single most valuable commodity in much of North America during the early 19th century. The fur was in constant demand for robes and coats, clothing trim, and top hats that were fashionable in European capitals. Financial empires and real estate holdings were founded on profits from the trade in beaver fur. Unregulated trapping continued for so long, well into the 20th century in some areas that the American Beaver disappeared from much of its original range.

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(continued on page 2)

Now reestablished over most of the continent and protected from over exploitation, it has become an agricultural pest in some regions, and it kills many trees, most of little value as timber. It's dams may block the upstream run of spawning salmon and flood stands of commercial timber, highways, land croplands, or change a farmer's pond or stream into a slough that will eventually become a meadow. However, the dams also help reduce erosion, and the ponds formed by the dam may create a favorable habitat for many forms of life: Insects lay eggs in them, fish feed on the insect larvae, and many kinds of water fowl and mammals including otters, minks, moose, and deer come to feed and drink.

Article from enature.com

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY SATURDAY MAY 6 10 AM



It's that time of year again when NICC volunteers grab their gloves and head for the highway. Have you noticed NICC's name on the two signs on Grass Lake Road between Rt. 83 and Rt. 59? NICC signed an agreement each year with the Lake County Division of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway program, to help clear debris on this section of highway. This year will be our 15th year to participate in this program. We would like it to have all volunteers meet at the corner of Rt. 83 & Grass Lake Rd next to Triangle Bait and Marine at 10 am.

Spring cleanup at the club grounds, will follow after the highway cleanup. With winter weather behind us, the grounds at NICC need a good facelift to clear fallen branches, leaves and trimming of dead branches on several trees. One of our plans is to give the house a good cleaning after being closed up since November. So, there's something to do for everyone.

Lunch will be served to all the volunteers. This is a perfect time to give some of your yearly 5 hours of time to the club. We understand some members are unable to help with the cleanup of the highway and the club grounds. Come on out and meet some of our members and enjoy.



Elections will be held on **May 8** at the combined Board/General meeting at 7 pm. Nominations are now open until **April 10** for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two directors, positions that are 3 year terms with responsibilities include, serving on at least one committee, provide support for club programs and activities and assist any officer as needed.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 10	General/board meeting at Antioch Library	7pm
May 6	Adopt-A-Highway	10 am
	NICC grounds cleanup at NICC	11:30 am
May 8	General/board meeting at NICC property	7pm
June 12	General/board meeting at NICC property	7pm